

the table, along with some fennel. At any rate, the ladies and gentlemen whose common enthusiasm is the cultivation and study of kitchen and medicinal herbs went on duly refreshed to the next high spot in the rounds of their national annual convention, in session in the Bay Area.

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE: TWO-LEGGED LIZARD BORN IN U. S.

IT'S A GREAT LIFE, being an Academy curator. Seems that Joseph R. Slevin, who curates reptiles, will take a few clams out of his departmental travel funds, match them with whatever he finds in his own jeans, and head south at the drop of a snake's shoehorn. He was just back to Australia again—last year, anyway. Galápagos—two or three times already. So, come spring wanderlust this year, Mr. Slevin went down cellar and inventoried his stock. Hmmm . . . low to shy on pike-nosed snakes, two-legged lizards, and sundry other unusual, high-demand items. Good for a round month, at least, of hunting in southern Arizona and even across the border.

Well, after a good seven weeks in Arizona's Huachuca Mountains, at Laguna Dam on the Colorado near Yuma, and just a little way, say 25 miles, into Sonora, Mr. Slevin and his companion, Mr. Wallace Wood, returned to San Francisco just in time for the summer fog season, which is unusually early this year, according to C. of C. reports. Herpetology now has a fairly decent stock of leaf-nosed and shovel-nosed ground snakes, worm snakes, the fourth known specimen of pike-nosed snakes from the United States, and other desirable accessions. But Mr. Slevin is still unable to authenticate reports that the two-legged lizard of the genus *Bipes* has actually been seen in this country. It is known to inhabit Baja California, but has not yet been seen or collected in the U. S. by any qualified scientist. The Academy is not offering a reward for information leading, etc., but the Department of Herpetology will be a happier place when it has a two-legged lizard safely stowed in the spirits down cellar, with a U. S. locality on the label.

BOTANISTS HERE AND THERE

IN BOTANY, this summer, the first systematic work in California on mosses for more than 50 years is being done by Miss Mary Jo Cobb, who, besides being a bryologist, teaches biological sciences at San Francisco College for Women.

Dr. Thomas H. Kearney returned recently from Arizona and Washington, D.C. and Miss Alice Eastwood visited relatives in Seattle and Pullman, Washington.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

NOTICE is hereby given to all Corporate Members that the Council at its June meeting approved the applications of Mr. Russell W. Davies, Mr. David Shepherd, Miss Pamela H. Thorsen, and Mr. G. C. Van Camp for REGULAR MEMBERSHIP, and of Kim Malville and Winifred Mitchell for STUDENT MEMBERSHIP in the California Academy of Sciences. If no objection to the election of these applicants be received at the office of the Academy within two weeks after July 8, they will be considered elected.

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Photograph by R. W. L. Potts

TRAVEL IN TRUK

—Old style. This is the last remaining bullock cart on Meen, an island of the Truk group. Note small boys hurrying to get into the picture.

(See page 2)

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July Announcement

THE REGULAR JULY MEETING of the California Academy of Sciences will be held in North American Hall, West Wing of the Academy buildings in Golden Gate Park, on Wednesday evening, July 13, at 8 o'clock. Mr. R. W. L. Potts will give an illustrated talk entitled

TRAVELS IN TRUK

On leave from his position as systematic entomologist in the Bureau of Plant Quarantine, California Department of Agriculture, Mr. Potts spent four months making a general insect survey of the Truk Islands, from which he has just returned. This survey of the central island group of the former Japanese mandate in the Caroline Islands was made under the auspices of the Pacific Science Board of the National Research Council, with the coöperation of the U. S. Navy and the California Academy of Sciences.

During the nearly thirty years of Japanese occupation between the two world wars, these Micronesian islands were virtually closed to scientific and other visitors from the outside world. Naturally, to western nations they—especially Truk—became Japan's "Islands of Mystery." Illegal under mandate terms, secret Gibraltar-like fortification was rumored. We now know this, like so much of Japan's supposed imperial strength, was sham—even Truk was but sketchily fortified before World War II. But though, afterwards, Truk was due to fade quickly from military and political significance, it became under American occupation an attainable objective at last for western scientists.

Pure science has much to gain from intensive examination of the sort now being carried forward in Truk and other Pacific islands. Light will doubtless be shed on the highly interesting question, How did those countless oceanic islands far from and never connected with the continental cradles of life become vegetated and populated? We know only fragments of the story today. On the practical side, these studies will contribute to the health and future economic well-being of native islanders. Science can help determine which groups need our medical and agricultural aid, which will be better off when freed at last of foreign control, ours or any other. In either case, under a depressed economy such as now largely exists in these islands of the Trust Territory, relief from crop pests and human disease vectors will result largely from biological research. For example, American scientists are searching for natural enemies and parasites of pests, which, when discovered, thoroughly tested for good and bad effects, introduced, and established, should give far cheaper and more permanent control than chemical and other artificial agents.

Human occupation brings biological change to a natural area; in a period of swift technological advance, this is the more rapid, complete, and too often destructive. On an island, especially, change may occur with astonishing speed and devastating thoroughness after the unthinking introduction of a single animal species, such as the domestic sheep, goat, or rabbit, or a plant species that will usurp the ground from native vegetation. Even a single introduced insect may upset the balance of nature in a small area.

The naturalist wants to know, before it is too late, what plant and animal life covered a particular part of the earth under natural conditions until induced change. Before European intrusion, Pacific islanders had reached a seeming biological equilibrium with their habitat. Much of that balance has been destroyed utterly in the few scores of years since; what is left of nature is being intensively studied and described in a last few long-observed areas. The peculiar recent history of the Truk group makes a report such as Mr. Potts will give doubly interesting. This investigator found field work already seriously hampered by the scarcity and remoteness of truly natural terrain on these islands. Mr. Potts is an experienced lecturer and comes armed with a fine series of kodachromes.

The public is cordially invited.

MARIN HAS "ALICE EASTWOOD DAY"

MISS ALICE EASTWOOD, the Academy's renowned Emeritus Curator of Botany, was honored by Marin County, in which she lived for many years, on Saturday, June 25, through a reception held in her name at the Marin Art and Garden Center in Ross. The elaborate social event, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Thomas Kent of Kentfield, was for the purpose of raising funds for the proposed Alice Eastwood Herbarium at the Academy. Staff members who attended report a very pleasant afternoon in the beautiful grounds of the Center.

PACIFIC DIVISION, A. A. A. S., MEETS IN VANCOUVER

THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL MEETING of the Pacific Division, American Association for the Advancement of Science, was held at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., June 13-18. Among Academy personnel who attended were Professor E. B. Babcock, Vice-President of the Academy, the Director, Dr. R. C. Miller, who is secretary of the Division, Mr. Thomas C. Groody, research assistant, and Miss Elizabeth McClintock, Assistant Curator of Botany. Dr. Miller presented a paper on "Some problems of population, food and available resources in the Pacific Area."

PARSLEY PUNCH?

ON JUNE 20 the Curator of Botany, John Thomas Howell, and two lady assistants were unexpecting hosts to a numerous delegation of the American Herb Society which dropped in from near-by Strybing Arboretum to visit the Academy herbarium. Unfazed, the skeleton crew on duty canvassed the resources of their closet—food locker, that is—and came up with parsley, punch, and cookies. Our reporter thought Mr. Howell said "parsley punch, and cookies," but was quickly set right: the familiar salad and soup greens were used only to decorate